DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 211 FL 019 112

TITLE	Global Education and Second Language Study in the Public Schools.
INSTITUTION	New York State School Boards Association, Albany.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	18p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Global Approach; *Graduation Requirements; *International Studies; *Limited English Speaking; *Public Policy; *Public Schools; Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Programs; State Aid; State Standards; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS	Global Education; *New York

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the New York State School Boards Association's position on the New York Board of Regents' policy concerning international studies and second language instruction in New York public schools. It contains a summary of association policy recommendations concerning internationalism and languages in the curriculum, staffing, proficiency standards, scheduling, guidelines for the education of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and state aid to school districts. The discussions both critique and outline specific strategies for meeting the Regents' stated objectives for the infusion of a global perspective into the curriculum, second language study requirements, mandated second language study in the elementary grades, mandated second language study in the middle grades, high school diploma requirements, and improving educational opportunities for LEP students. The proposed state plan for increased categorical aid for language instruction is criticized, and, instead, increased general aid is recommended. In addition, encouragement of second language study is recommended over mandated language education. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED330211

Global Education and Second Language Study in the Public Schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Bowen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A Position Paper of the
NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

FL019112

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President . . . . . GRACE R. McIVER
Scotia-Glenville
Vice President . . . . . REXENE ASHFORD
Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES
Vice President . . . . . RICHARD L. ORNAUER
Merrick
Treasurer . . . . . W. PARKER DODGE
George Junior Republic
Immediate Past President . . . . . ARLENE R. PENFIELD
Northeastern Clinton
Area 1 . . . . . JUDITH H. KATZ
Williamsville
Area 2 . . . . . ALBERT W. HAWK
Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming BOCES
Area 3 . . . . . PATRICIA M. PETERSEN
Pioneer
Area 4 . . . . . PETER JEFFERS
Homer
Area 5 . . . . . JAMES E. CALDWELL
Canastota
Area 6 . . . . . EARL LUMLEY
St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES
Area 7 . . . . . GORDON S. PURRINGTON
Guilderland
Area 8 . . . . . REXENE ASHFORD
Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES
Area 9 . . . . . KAY MICHELFELD
Warwick Valley
Area 10 . . . . . GEORGINE J. HYDE
East Ramapo
Area 11 . . . . . RICHARD L. ORNAUER
Merrick
Area 12 . . . . . PAMELA BETHEIL
Middle Island
City of New York . . . . . DR. AMELIA H. ASHE
New York City
Large City School Boards . . . . . JUDITH P. FISHER
Buffalo

STAFF

Executive Director . . . . . LOUIS GRUMET
Deputy Executive Director . . . . . JAMES V. VETRO
Administrator of Research
and Development . . . . . JEFFREY M. BOWEN
Research Assistants
. . . . . DEBRA L. LIPKOWITZ
. . . . . JOHN M. QUIMBY
Research Aide . . . . . VIRGINIA E. HENRY
Production Assistant . . . . . DIANE REMMERS
Editor . . . . . RITA MARY CREWELL

Global Education and Second Language Study in the Public Schools

A Position Paper of the
NEW YORK STATE
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Acknowledgement

The Board of Directors is grateful to the Association's Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Language Study in the Public Schools—chaired by Joanne Garrity, president of the Somers School Board—for its interim report and recommendations. Special notice is due to the efforts of Dr. Jeffrey M. Bowen, administrator of research and development, for preparing the original manuscript.

©1985 by the New York State School Boards Association, Inc.
119 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210

All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in U.S.A.

Table of Contents

Summary of Policy Recommendations	ii
Preface	iii
Making Global Education Happen	1
Second Language Study Requirements	3
Second Language Study in Elementary School	5
Second Language Study in Middle Grades	5
Regents Diploma Requirements	6
Students With Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	7
State Aid Implications	8
Conclusions	9

Preface

Global interdependence is a reality. Virtually every day one is reminded that events and decisions in other parts of the world influence this nation's future as well as an individual's daily living patterns. A multitude of interconnections—military, economic, cultural, and ecological—are continuously shaping the contours of the world community. Therefore, the public schools should offer ample opportunities for children to gain the knowledge, skills, and understanding to thrive in an interdependent world.

The Regents' adopted goals for elementary and secondary education call for each student to acquire knowledge about political, economic, and social institutions and procedures found in *this* country as well as *other* countries. The Regents expect that each student will develop the ability to understand and respect people of different national origins and cultural heritage, staying attuned to the commonalities and contrasts in the human condition. This Association supports these educational goals, recognizing that a global perspective helps students realize that by learning about the interrelated systems of the world, they better prepare themselves to participate effectively in a democratic society.

Summary of Policy Recommendations

1. Global perspectives should be infused throughout the elementary and secondary school curriculum.

2. The Regents and the Commissioner of Education should develop a comprehensive plan for global education, emphasizing illustrations of successful local programs, coordinated revision of relevant syllabi, staff development opportunities, and a *rebalance of the relationship in the Regents Action Plan between curricular infusion of global perspectives and foreign language proficiency.*

3. NYSSBA encourages the teaching and learning of second languages in our schools, while recognizing that English is fast becoming the international language standard of the world. Student proficiency in English should be a top educational priority.

4. Encouraging rather than mandating second language study is highly desirable. A mandate may erode rather than strengthen the quality of public school teaching and learning.

5. A careful, thorough analysis of future second language staffing needs should be developed to predict accurately the feasibility of the Regents' plans.

6. Elementary school children can be taught second languages effectively. An early start should be encouraged, but, if uniformly required, would be impractical and would compete with other important educational demands.

7. Second language study in the middle grades calls for standards of proficiency before it can be assessed properly; alternatives should be sought to create more flexibility in student schedules and to preserve students' commitment to remain in school.

8. Important educational opportunities may be denied to Regents diploma students who must fulfill second language study requirements and, therefore, may not have enough time in their schedules to pursue occupational education options. More program and scheduling flexibility should be provided to Regents diploma students.

9. The State Education Department should develop and publicize guidelines that school districts can use to give students with limited English proficiency an education grounded on essential standards, but allowing for individual choice where second language study beyond their native language is concerned.

10. There should be a significant, sustained increase in the State's share of general aid to school districts. This would support the infusion of components of global education throughout the entire curriculum. Less desirable would be aid earmarked for second language instruction. This could set a precedent for developing a number of narrow, restricted categorical aids, which would be difficult to administer and equalize statewide.

Making Global Education Happen

The Regents Action Plan relies upon two major strategies for accomplishing the goals of global education. The first involves curriculum revisions, especially for social studies, and strong encouragement for schools to provide interdisciplinary learning experiences to heighten student awareness of differences and similarities among the world's cultures and other systems of human interaction. The second is to require all students to gain at least a basic functional proficiency in a language other than English.

The second strategy has provoked so much controversy and disagreement within the educational community that too little attention has been given to the first—infusion of global perspectives throughout the curriculum.

Admirably ambitious and far-reaching, the infusion approach calls for major changes in the way our teachers teach history, literature, geography, social sciences, the arts, and English as well as other languages. These changes would affect all grade levels, K through 12. Pre-service and in-service programs would be needed to prepare teachers to draw relevant intercultural comparisons in the course of their instruction. New equipment, appropriately tailored instructional material, expanded supervisory assistance, new standards for learning evaluation, and additional public support would be essential elements.

To meet the challenge of infusion, state social studies syllabi are being revised. An inventory of requisite student skills is being developed. Interdisciplinary projects are recommended for all grades, and there will be a new Regents Competency Test in global studies for students in the class of 1991 and thereafter. Each of these initiatives has merit. Even taken together, this Association suggests that these proposals do not constitute an integrated plan for realizing the goals of global education.

To remedy this, the New York State School Boards Association urges the Regents and the Commissioner to take the following steps: (1) develop, with extensive local school district consultation, a comprehensive plan for global education of the type and scope devised by the State Education Department (with advisory group participation) to address school/community partnerships, including illustrations of successful local programs and listings of such likely resources as university departments, cultural institutions, specialized associations, private business and industry, and community organizations; (2) begin a coordinated revision of all relevant syllabi, paying special attention to

those which will heighten global awareness; (3) develop and share with local school districts and institutions of higher education models of in-service programs designed to help teachers change the way they teach global perspectives; (4) provide organized opportunities for experienced teachers from public elementary and secondary schools and from universities and colleges to work together to design new instructional material for interdisciplinary approaches to global education; (5) *rebalance* the relationship in the Action Plan between *comprehensive curricular infusion of the global perspective and second language proficiency.*

Second Language Study Requirements

This Association encourages the teaching and learning of second languages in our public schools. *Although English is fast becoming the standard international language, and proficiency in English should be a top priority,* students nonetheless benefit from learning one or more additional languages, not only because these aid in effective global communication, but also because English skills may be strengthened as a result.

The praiseworthy goals for global education adopted by the Regents will be thwarted by *mandating* rather than *simply encouraging* second language study.

For several reasons—all linked to instructional effectiveness in our schools—NYSSBA fears that mandates may ironically erode rather than strengthen the quality of public school teaching and learning. Two required units of second language study, prior to the end of the 9th grade, are insufficient to yield a bilingually adept student body, and may drain a schools' resources so—time, money and, perhaps most important, focus—as to undermine existing programs and proposed revisions. Moreover, the second language curricula, standardized as they must be if universal, will of necessity be geared to some lowest common denominator of student ability and readiness, therefore, falling far short of the goal of proficiency.

The underlying problem is that expectations—about a bilingually competent citizenry prepared to succeed in an interdependent world—are too grandiose and idealistic to be met by two units of second language study, which is superficial, and too little too late, to be of practical use.

Erosion of instruction and an unfortunate regression toward the minimum, rather than the best, may result if districts cannot recruit qualified, capable second language teachers. In fact, few students in our colleges and universities are preparing to teach foreign language in the public schools. Yet it is the teacher with a specialty in second language teaching, rather than one who has amended his or her certificate as an in-service expedient, who is most needed for quality language instruction.

Recent language teacher shortages in the face of increasing student interest in second language study already have created serious problems in Oklahoma, Utah, Louisiana, and Virginia. A similar shortage in New York is quite likely. It is estimated that before the end of this decade nearly 2,000 second language teachers will be needed to meet the new demand created for units of study in grades K through 9. At

the same time, according to the State Teachers Retirement System, within the next five years nearly 20,000 teachers statewide are due to reach retirement age; and another 20,000 are already eligible to retire. A thorough analysis of future second language staffing needs could predict accurately the feasibility of implementing the Regents' plans.

The cost of fulfilling new second language study requirements almost certainly will cause damaging program sacrifices in other subjects, eroding the *comprehensive strategies* needed to effect global education. According to cost estimates developed by the State Education Department, beginning with 1988-89, and in each year thereafter, school districts will incur an additional, annual $60 to $70 million obligation just to pay for the new teachers needed for second language instruction prior to the end of grade 9.

Second language study plans, adopted at the state level, leave little leeway for local initiative. One district, for example, might wish to provide individually tailored options for the linguistically talented. Another might decide that only certain academic specialties or "majors" warrant mandatory second language study. Yet another might require second language instruction at the elementary level only, allowing the student to choose at the secondary level. The flexibility afforded by local control will surely be discouraged by the uniform requirements the State has adopted. *Individual students will be the victims.*

Imposing language study on *all* students ignores individual student abilities, talents, and interests. Simply on the basis of anticipated career opportunities for public school graduates over the next two decades, it is unrealistic to expect that most local diploma students will derive any direct benefit from their second language instruction.

Second Language Study in Elementary Grades

Elementary school children *can* be taught second languages effectively—in fact, the earlier they start the better. However, if uniformly required, this would be impractical and would compete with other important education demands. In recent years, the elementary school curriculum has diversified. It is difficult to schedule current instructional requirements, let alone contemplated additions. Success at the elementary school level in language instruction will demand school districts' willingness to commit adequate instructional time and financial support to the program, availability of well tested teaching methods, and follow through at the secondary level.

Attesting to these needs is the disastrous lesson taught by the underfunded, piecemeal implementation of Foreign Language for the Elementary Schools (FLES) in the 1960's and 70's. The likelihood of success in the 1980's will be limited by prevailing public opinion of elementary school second language instruction as a "frill" or "dabbling"—an opinion much less likely to be held with regard to social studies designed to familiarize children with the artistic, cultural, and intellectual accomplishments of civilization.

Second Language Study in Middle Grades

The criteria for proficiency and the syllabi that will reflect the standards of second language instruction in the middle school have not yet been developed, tested and evaluated. This will make proper assessment of related instructional strategies and course scheduling difficult.

Problems will be created by the limited amount of time available in student schedules for remediation. Research has shown that student commitment to stay in school is strongly influenced by experience in the middle grades. If a student fails while studying a second language and time for remediation is inadequate, that student may view the effort as frustrating and irrelevant, possibly dropping out. Even if students clear the proficiency hurdle, they could see the effort as a waste if no further language study is planned before graduation.

Short of eliminating the second language study requirement for *all* students, one alternative would be to permit a proficiency test to be taken at any point prior to graduation with summer school as acceptable preparation. This would provide more flexibility for students' course schedules during the middle and high school grades. Another possibility would be to exempt students in remediation from the second language requirement, at least during grades 7 and 8, a time when the students' schedules will be extremely cramped by various other instructional prerequisites. Logically, the exemption might be contingent upon approval by the student's building principal and parent or guardian.

Regents Diploma Requirements

Requiring three units of second language study (or passing the 9th grade proficiency test plus completing two units) for a Regents diploma will deny some students the diploma simply because their schedules will not accommodate the time requirement. Students pursuing occupational education specialties, especially those leading to a license, e.g., licensed practical nursing, or concentration in the fine arts, will face a *forced choice* : Either they can obtain a Regents diploma—still rightly regarded by colleges and the general public as a prestigious accomplishment; *or* they can prepare for a career that will fulfill their individual desires, talents, and economic needs.

The Regents Action Plan has placed a priority on *not* tracking students out of opportunities. Yet where Regents students, language study requirements, and occupational options are supposed to come together, that priority is endangered. As with the middle grades, more flexibility would help. Alternative ways for Regents students to obtain second language study credit should be considered. Summer language immersion institutes, exchange programs, and occupational applications of second languages through BOCES are possible illustrations.

Students with Limited English Proficiency

Individuals with limited English speaking ability represent a special resource of major proportion in New York State. This state has twice the national average of foreign-born residents and almost twice the national average of persons who speak a language other than English at home. Our schools are hard at work improving the English ability of many of these individuals. More than 100,000 are involved presently in either bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL), or both. These young people, from 174 school districts, representing 74 different language backgrounds, have the potential to make global education come alive in our classrooms. With planning and know-how made systematic by technical assistance from our State Education Department, school could tap for educational purposes the cultural resources of bilingual children.

Unfortunately, another potentiality is that many Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students will drop out of school in frustration unless the educational requirements imposed on them are reasonable, consistent, and reflective of their unique situation. Of special concern to this Association are basic, yet unanswered policy questions about second language study requirements for ESL students. Under what circumstances, for example, may tested proficiency in the student's native language be used for partial credit toward a Regents or local diploma? If, in fact, LEP students may be exempted from the two units of second language study required in grades K through 9, when should the appropriate test for proficiency in the native language be given, triggering the exemption? Indeed, what is an appropriate test? What standards should it reflect?

Regulations to implement the Regents Action Plan permit the use of alternative testing for students whose native language is other than English. But given the diversity of native languages, and the absence of standards for test rating and administration, assuring competency in a native language other than English may be impossible. The State Education Department should develop and publicize guidance that school districts can use to give LEP students an education anchored by essential standards but allowing individual choice where second language study beyond one's native language is concerned.

School districts with well-established programs would benefit more from the aid than would those facing the extra expense of starting new programs.

State Aid Implications

Regents plans for second language study in the public schools will prove expensive mainly because many more teachers will be needed. Once incurred, the expense will be sustained every year thereafter. A sustained elevation of state aid, therefore, will be necessary.

The Board of Regents has advocated categorical aid to defray second language instructional costs, but the proposal has flaws. School districts with well-established programs would benefit more from the aid than would those facing the extra expense of starting new programs. Hiring new teachers or purchasing new learning material would not generate specific aid for second language instruction, whereas high enrollment in existing courses *would* produce aid. Financial inequality would result because higher enrollment in second language study probably correlates positively with a district's socio-economic index and its ability to spend money on previously elective programs.

Aid specifically for second language instruction communicates the message that other subject areas are less valuable or less expensive for schools to provide. All new curriculum in the Regents Action Plan will prove costly, and unless the Plan is supported by aid dedicated to the full funding of its requirements, the budget to support current worthwhile programs may be severely curtailed.

In view of the Regents' previously published proposals to aid second language study, there is the possibility that a number of other narrow or restricted categorical aids may develop, creating a combination difficult to administer and equalize statewide. Therefore, this Association urges a significant increase in the State's share of general aid to school districts. This approach would be better suited to the need to infuse components of global education through the entire curriculum.

Conclusions

The New York State School Boards Association is firmly committed to the goals of global education. It shares the Regents' expectations that each student should understand and be able to draw lessons from the systems of human interaction found throughout the world. This will happen most effectively through comprehensive infusion of global perspectives throughout most of the schools' curriculum. The Regents and the State Education Department should develop the plans to facilitate use of this strategy in all school districts.

This Association encourages the teaching and learning of second languages in our public schools, but also believes too much emphasis has been placed on language studies as a panacea for isolationism or parochialism. Second language study *mandates,* especially where they create uniform obligations for *all* students, are opposed by NYSSBA because we fear a program that in itself may be inadequate may also have the disastrous side effect of diffusing schools' efforts and resources in other crucial areas. We are also gravely concerned about the unavailability of teaching staff, excessive expense, usurpation of local control, and suppression of student individuality.

Fundamental problems are associated with mandated second language study at all levels—in the elementary schools, the middle grades, and in high school (especially for Regents diploma candidates). There is also reason to be concerned about methods being considered for providing state aid specifically for second language study. In this statement, the New York State Schools Boards Associaton has tried to suggest worthwhile alternatives. Aware of the fact that full implementation of the Regents' proposals for language study will not be needed for several years, this Association urges that serious, systematic consideration be given to the positions NYSSBA has established in the interest of young people statewide.